

BBC Learning English
Words in the News
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*Beijing - Moscow hotline
'used for first time'*



A new military hotline between Beijing and Moscow has been used for the first time according to reports in the Chinese state media. A senior Chinese officer discussed a range of topics with his Russian counterpart, Xinhua the state news agency reported. This report from Chris Hogg:

In a world where emails and mobile devices mean you can always **be in touch with** the office, it seems strange that two of the world's most important military powers have only now started using a direct telephone link designed to make it easier for their senior officers to contact each other.

No doubt **security concerns** and **diplomatic issues** had **to be resolved** first. But in huge **bureaucracies** it's not always easy to get to the man in charge in a hurry. The hotline will now make that easier, allowing what the Chinese describe as "timely communication on significant issues". Put simply they can now pick up the phone when there's **a crisis** and ask the Russians what's going on and what they're doing about it.

This first historic call was **not so urgent** apparently. The two soldiers exchanged views on the international and regional situation, bilateral relations and other issues of common concern.

There is still no hotline between China's Armed Forces and the Pentagon in Washington. The two countries' presidents first agreed **to set one up** nearly three years ago. A further agreement was signed between the two defence departments in February but since then progress on establishing it appears to have **stalled**.

Chris Hogg, BBC News, Beijing

Vocabulary and definitions

be in touch with	communicate with
security concerns	worries about the safety of information
diplomatic issues	political decisions about who can talk to whom
to be resolved	to be agreed upon
bureaucracies	organisations or countries which have many complicated and confusing rules for doing things
a crisis	a very difficult political situation, an emergency
not so urgent	not so important
to set one up	to begin a telephone hotline
stalled	stopped without making progress

Read and listen to the story and the vocabulary online:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/newsenglish/witn/2008/12/081229_hotline.shtml